(b) the steps taken by Government to reduce the number of such accidents; and

(c) the result achieved thereof till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) During the last three years there were 6 aircraft accidents on the airports. The reasons as brought out in the investigation reports are improper decision of the pilots, poor crew co-ordination, mechanical/technical problems, non adherence of laid down procedures and weather disturbances.

(b) and (c) To avoid air accidents, various accident prevention programmes have been initiated by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Safety audits, surveillance inspections etc. are carried out to find out hazards in the operations/ engineering departments of the operator. Corrective action is taken to eliminate or reduce the hazards. Safety management system is being introduced with all service providers. Safety Recommendations emanating from the investigations are followed up by Directorate General of Civil Aviation for implementation by the concerned units to prevent recurrence of such accidents. Inspite of tremendous increase in Passenger Traffic and number of Aircraft during the last few years, aircraft accident rate has come down.

Air cargo handling at airports in Kerala

327. SHRI K. E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Kerala Government owned Kerala State Industrial Enterprises Ltd. (KSIE), a profit making company with ISO certification for excellence in performance, has been handling Air Cargo in the two airports at Trivandrum and Calicut for several decades;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for denying this right to KSIE after the airports are renovated and rebuilt;

(d) whether the Chief Minister of Kerala has approached the Centre for restoration of *status quo;* and

(e) if so, what is the final decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The air cargo complex at Trivandrum airport was set up by M/s Kerala State Industrial Enterprises (KSIE) in the year 1979 outside the Trivandrum airport in a temporary shed. Later, KSIE constructed a proper air cargo complex in 1987 for handling export and import cargo outside the airport.

At Calicut Airport, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has constructed a building and handed it over to KSIE for processing export cargo whereas KSIE has its own warehouse near the airport for handling import cargo.

(c) Till date, the cargo facilities at Trivandrum and Calicut are being operated by KSIE itself who is also the customs appointed custodian.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) At the behest of the State Government, AAI has been directed by the Central Government to continue the existing arrangement for cargo operation at Trivandrum Airport.

Baljek Airport

328. SHRI THOMAS SANGMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) by when the major works relating to Baljek (Tura) Airport would be completed;

(b) the reasons for the delay; and

(c) by when the airport is likely to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India has completed all the development works of Baljek Airport. The airport is planned to be commissioned in November, 2008.

Training of pilots abroad

329. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated shortage of trained pilots in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that some pilots have been sent to different training schools in the USA and other countries for training;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the actual cost of training in the USA and other countries;

(d) whether India does not have quality training schools to train pilots; and

(e) if so, the steps taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There is a shortage of aircraft type endorsed pilots, particularly in the commander category. The estimated shortage is 900.

(b) No, Sir. Government does not send pilots for training abroad.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. India has quality flying training schools to train pilots. Some of the training schools are provided with necessary assistance by way of providing trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/Aero Club of India. Facilities and Training infrastructure at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) have been upgraded and modernized to enhance its training capacity and to make it a world-class institute. In order to further augment the flying training facilities in the country it has been decided to establish a world-class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra.